

consequence of the confusion daily arising in the administration of the English and French system of law in the same courts. This change of laws, effected in the manner most consonant to the largest views of legislation, was not forced on the legislature and people of the state by an external authority, but was the suggestion of their own political wisdom. Louisiana is not the only State in the Union which has been troubled by the existence of conflicting systems of law. The State of New York, till within a few years, suffered under the same evil, which it remedied in the same way, by employing a commission of its ablest lawyers to digest both systems of law into a common code. The contending populations of Lower Canada may well imitate these examples; and if, instead of endeavouring to force their respective laws upon each other, they would attempt an amalgamation of the two systems into one, adopting what is really best in both, the result would be creditable to the Province.

Every provision was made in Louisiana for securing to both races a perfectly equal participation in all the benefits of the Government. It is true that the intention of the Federal Government to encourage the use of the English language, was evinced by the provision of the Constitution with respect to the language of the records; but those who will reflect how very few people ever read such documents, and how very recently it is that the English language has become the language of the law in this country, will see that such a provision could have little practical effect. In all cases in which convenience requires it, the different parties use their respective languages in the courts of justice, and in both branches of the Legislature. In every judicial proceeding, all documents which pass between the parties are required to be in both languages, and the laws are published in both languages. Indeed, the equality of the two languages is preserved in the Legislature by a very singular contrivance; the French and English members speak their respective languages, and an interpreter, as I was informed, after every speech, explains its purport in the other language.

For a long time, the distinction between the two races was the cause of great jealousy. The Americans crowded into the State, in order to avail themselves of its great natural resources, and its unequalled commercial advantages; there, as everywhere else on that continent, their energy and habits of business gradually drew the greater part of the commercial business of the country into their hands; and though, I believe, a few of the richest merchants, and most of the owners of plantations, are French, the English form the bulk of the wealthier classes.—Year after year, their numbers have become greater, and it is now generally supposed that they constitute the numerical majority. It may be imagined that the French have borne this with a good deal of dissatisfaction; but as the advantages gained by the English were entirely the result, not of favor, but of their superiority in a perfectly free competition, this jealousy could excite no murmurs against the Government.—The competition made the two races enemies at first, but it has gradually stirred the emulation of the less active race, and made them rivals.—The jealousies in the city of New Orleans were so great at one time, that the Legislature of the State, at the desire of the English, who complained of the inertness of the French, formed separate municipalities for the French and English parts of the city. These two municipalities are now actuated by a spirit of rivalry, and each undertakes great public works for the ornament and convenience of their respective quarters.

The distinction still lasts, and still causes a good deal of division; the society of each race is said to be in some measure distinct, but not by any means hostile; and some accounts represent the social mixture to be very great. All accounts represent the division of the races as becoming gradually less and less marked; their newspapers are printed in the two languages, on opposite pages; their local politics are entirely merged in those of the Union; and instead of discovering in their papers any vestiges of a quarrel of races, they are found to contain a repetition of the same party recriminations and party arguments which abound in all other parts of the Federation.